

Town Manager Report


Town of Lunenburg-February 4, 2020





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Announcement on Existing Vacancies:

The following is a list of vacancies on the following committees:

- Agricultural Commission (1 regular member and 3 alternate vacancies)
- Americans with Disabilities Act Commission (1 vacancy)
- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 design professional; craftsperson or building contractor familiar with historic renovation)
- Finance Committee (1 position appointed by the Finance Committee Appointing Committee)
- Open Space Committee (1 vacancy-citizen at large)
- Planning Board (1 position appointed by the remaining members of the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen until the next Annual Town Election in May)
- Sewer Commission (1 vacancy appointed by the remaining members of the Sewer Commission and the Board of Selectmen until the next Annual Town Election in May)
- Zoning Board of Appeals (1 regular member and 2 Associate vacancies)

Talent bank forms can be obtained on the Town Website and forwarded to the Board of Selectmen's Office.

Update on Meeting with MassDOT re: Route 2A and Route 13 Intersection:

The Police Chief, DPW Director and I met with MassDOT on January 29th on site and reviewed the issues with the intersection and the right lane northbound into Walmart. It appeared that a relatively easy solution of making the lights on Electric Ave and on the Walmart side of the intersection priority protected green arrows would address the issue. MassDOT is going to do a traffic volume count within the next week and will be reviewing the crash data. We were told we would hear back within the next month.

Complete Streets Award Ceremony:

I attended the award ceremony for the communities that received the Complete Streets Construction Funding grant on January 28th in Fitchburg. The Lieutenant Governor, Senator Tran, and Transportation Secretary Pollack all spoke about the creation of this grant program and have awarded 148 construction grants totaling \$46 million since creating the funding program in February 2016. For this round, MassDOT awarded \$8.1 M to 24 communities. It was a nice event and highlighted the impact of programs such as this have on the cities and towns.

Old Primary School Hazardous Materials Survey:

The Hazardous Materials Survey was performed on January 30th and we should have a report by next week.

17 and 23 West Street RFP:

The deadline to respond to the Request for Proposals for the disposition of 17 and 23 West Street was yesterday and there were no bids received. The Assistant Town Manager and I are reviewing re-bidding this and hopefully will have more interest in a second attempt.

Upcoming Meetings, Events and Other Announcements:

- The TCP Building Design Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, February 5th at 6 pm in the Ritter Memorial Building to rate the three firms that were interviewed on January 29th.
- The Green Communities Task Force will be meeting Thursday, February 6th at 6:30 p.m. in the Ritter Memorial Building to discuss conversion and/or purchase of the streetlights to LED.
- The Public meeting to hear feedback on the ADA Public Rights of Way Transition Plan put together by Stantec and administered by Montachusett Regional Planning Commission will be on Tuesday, February 11th at 7:00 p.m. and I will present a preliminary budget for FY21 on February 11th to the Selectmen and to the Finance Committee on February 13th at 6:30 p.m.

Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Discussion:

I will be presenting a preliminary FY21 budget next Tuesday to the Selectmen and next Thursday to the Finance Committee. In advance of that, I wanted to share some of the latest updates to the FY21 budget that will affect the overall bottom-line. Our insurance carrier (MIA) released the rate range for

MIIA members and the range was a minimum of -1.5%, an average of 3.7% and a maximum of 8.3%. I spoke with our account representative and she confirmed that we could reduce our estimate safely to the average of 3.7%. It was relayed that our loss ratios look good and our actual renewal will be no more than that percentage and may be less. We should have that figure within the next couple of weeks.

As I reported at the presentations on the Five Year Forecast, the estimate for New Growth that was used for the target budgets to develop the FY21 budget was \$350,000. As you recall, this is a reduction from the estimate of \$375,000 used for the FY20 budget and seeing a trend, was reduced to \$350,000. Our regional assessing firm, RRG, has provided their estimate of what they project will be captured for New Growth that would affect the FY21 budget, and their estimate came in substantially lower at \$214,000. We had a meeting today to review the validity of this estimate and based on the review that they have performed using existing building permits and known projects at this time that would result in capturing New Growth, I will be reducing the estimate used for the target budget. We will continue to review this, but erring on the side of caution, will adjust that estimate now.

At this point in time, the only new positions on the Town side are an additional full time police officer, an additional Career Firefighter, and I am exploring a regional Education and Enforcement Coordinator position that would be fully funded by grant money. This position requires an update to the Town's private hauler regulations, which would be done through the Board of Health. I will be attending the Board of Health's meeting in March and a webinar with the two other communities that would be included in this grant request on February 12th. The position would focus on enforcing the recycling requirements by the private haulers. The preliminary budget proposal eliminates the Assistant Town Mechanic position that after assessing the current structure, the Mechanic that was hired in FY 2019 has worked out well and we do not see a need to keep this position. These funds will be reallocated to address other needs such as ADA compliance and Town Facilities.

District Local Technical Assistance Application for ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (TM Goal #3, i):

I am asking the Board to sign a letter of support to Montachusett Regional Planning Commission for the District Local Technical Assistance Application to complete the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. As you may recall, we received District Local Technical Assistance from MRPC to perform the Self-Evaluation component and this would complete the whole process.

Department Head Meeting:

Here are some updates from our monthly meeting that was held last Tuesday:

- PACC: PACC is working with Comcast on adding the third channel that will be an educational channel.
- Library: The Library is receiving a grant from Hannafords for new shelving at the Library. The Library Board of Trustees will be submitting an article relative to the ability to direct the investments of the Library Trust Funds.
- Town Clerk: The Town Clerk's Office is busy getting ready for the Special State Election, Special State Primary and the Presidential Election and this will be the first time for early voting at the Primary. Census forms are due now and dog licenses are due by April 1st.
- Land Use: The Land Use Director report the Planning Board will have articles for the Annual Town Meeting for an amended Earth Removal Bylaw and amended Stormwater Bylaw. The Planning Board is also moving forward in hiring a firm to do updated population projections.

